



# SARAWAK

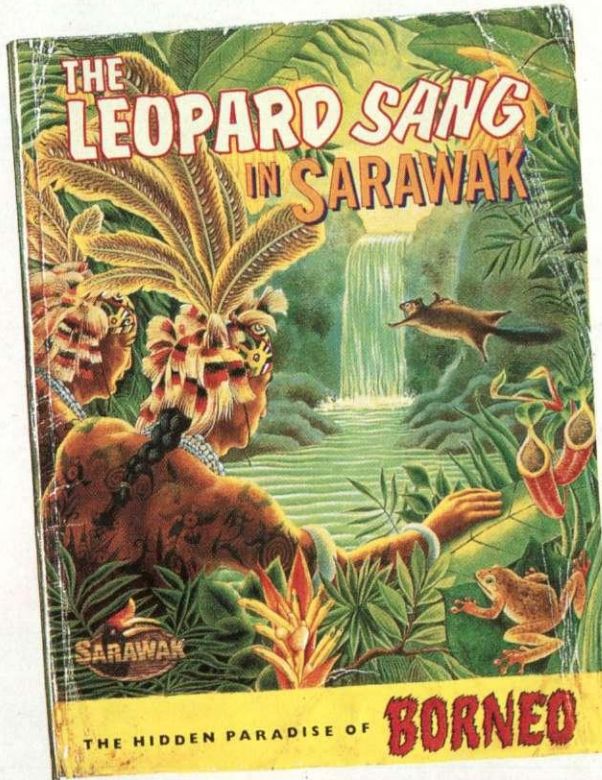
THE HIDDEN PARADISE OF

# BORNEO



# WELCOME TO SARAWAK

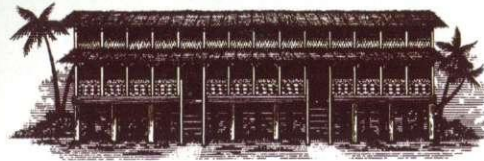
Would you like to befriend an orang-utan? Learn to use a blowpipe? Or maybe get married in a traditional tribal ceremony? You could do it all in one day in Sarawak. Perched on the northwestern edge of the exotic island of Borneo, Sarawak is literally quite unlike any other place on earth.



Start your holiday by spending a day or two in the capital – Kuching. Here the Sarawak Tourist Association (STA), or the Visitors Information Centre (which also houses the National Park and Wildlife Booking Office) will provide you with all the brochures and advice you need to plan your stay.

You'll find an astonishing variety of things to tempt you. Wonders of the natural world. A rich and fascinating history. A patchwork quilt of more than thirty different ethnic groups. And also long, sandy beaches for water sports or more traditional beach holidays.

Despite being home to the world's oldest rainforest, travel around Sarawak is easy. Tourists are welcome



The longhouse is like an entire village under one roof.

## DAMAI

Forty minutes from Kuching, Damai – Sarawak's premier beach resort area – offers sandy beaches and pristine jungles, together with numerous leisure activities. Three resorts provide a full range of water sports, jungle trekking and cultural options. These include visits to local longhouses, a championship Arnold Palmer-designed golf course and superb seafood restaurants perched on stilts along the shore.

Many tours and day trips leave from Damai including those to the nearby Sarawak Cultural Village and Bako National Park. Trips to interesting Malay fishing villages, nearby islands and river cruises around the Santubong Peninsula can also be arranged.

## NORTHERN SARAWAK

Miri, near the border with Brunei, is the gateway to the north of Sarawak and its spectacular national parks, rivers and highlands. Regular Malaysian Airlines (MAS) flights connect Miri with Kuching and other domestic destinations.



Gunung Mulu National Park, about 45 minutes flight from Miri is one of Sarawak's greatest attractions. The famous limestone caves here include the world's largest cave passage, the largest natural rock chamber in the world, and the longest cave system in Southeast Asia.

Niah Great Cave in Niah National Park, about two hours drive from Miri, is the site of the

## NATURAL WONDERS

Ten national parks scattered throughout the state make for easy access to Sarawak's splendid natural treasures.

Permits and accommodation reservations as well as advice and guides are

available from the Visitors Information Centres located in most major towns.

Bako, the oldest National Park, is also the closest to Kuching and easiest to get to. Residents include the endemic proboscis monkey, the famous bearded pig, silver leaf monkeys and long-tailed macaques. The park also showcases a wide variety of vegetation found in Borneo, including carnivorous pitcher plants, sundews, bladderworts and wild orchids.

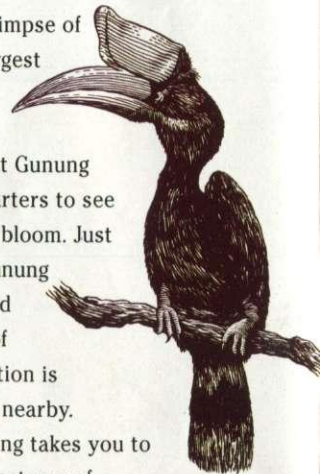
For a glimpse of the world's largest flower, the one metre wide Rafflesia, contact the warden at Gunung Gading Park headquarters to see

whether any flowers are about to bloom. Just two hours drive from Kuching, Gunung Gading is 4,106 hectares of rugged mountain scenery with a series of beautiful waterfalls. Accommodation is available in the park or at hotels nearby.

A 45-minute drive from Kuching takes you to the Kubah National Park, 2,230 hectares of rolling sandstone hills sprinkled with crystal



Borneo is home to many different species of bat.



Our state symbol, the rhinoceros hornbill.

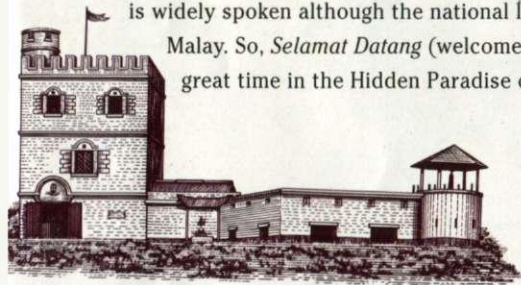
The Niah Caves contain prehistoric remains dating back 40,000 years.





sports or more traditional beach holidays.

Despite being home to the world's oldest rainforest, travel around Sarawak is easy. Tourists are welcome everywhere and the people are all very friendly. English is widely spoken although the national language is Malay. So, *Selamat Datang* (welcome), and have a great time in the Hidden Paradise of Borneo.



Fort Margherita, named after Rajah Charles Brooke's wife.

## KUCHING

Nestled on the banks of the Sarawak River, the capital, Kuching, retains the old-world charm of its romantic past.

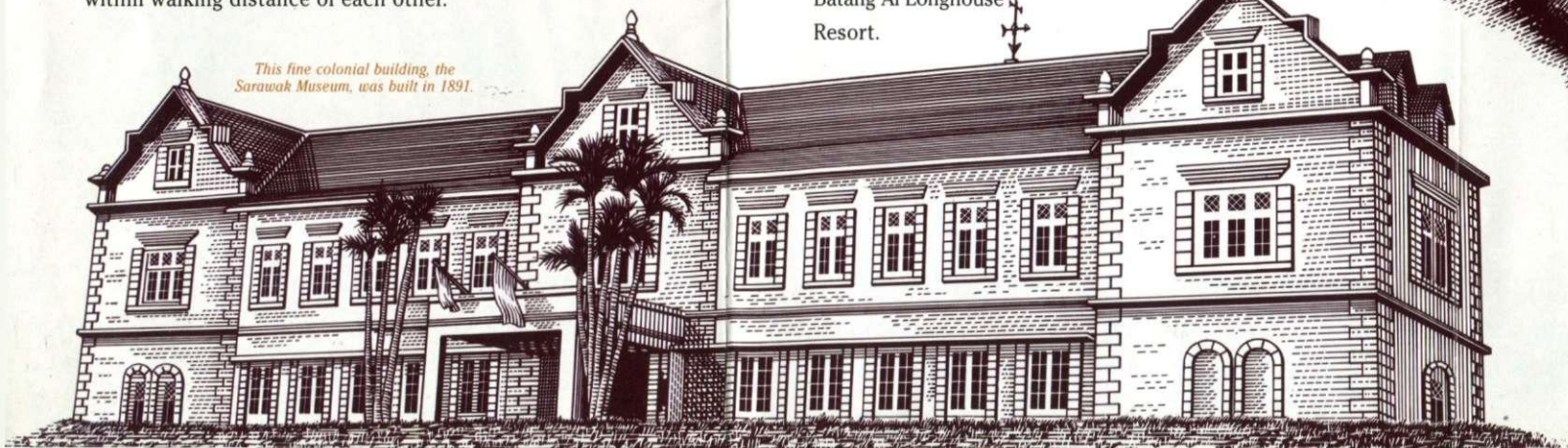
The river is the focal point of the town and features a graceful, European-style esplanade – The Kuching Waterfront – with views across to the Astana (the palace) and Fort Margherita. For another perspective on the town, hire a boat and float down the river either by day or night – the sunset is fantastic.

The narrow, bustling streets near the river are crammed with ornate temples, markets, historic buildings and traditional Chinese shophouses selling local handicrafts. Kuching also lays claim to nine museums, many within walking distance of each other.



The markets of Kuching are a cornucopia of tribal handicrafts.

This fine colonial building, the Sarawak Museum, was built in 1891.



Borneo, one of the most biologically diverse islands on Earth

system in Southeast Asia. Niah Great Cave in Niah National Park, about two hours drive from Miri, is the site of the oldest human remains found in Southeast Asia. You can walk through this cave via a raised plankwalk winding through lowland forests teeming with birds and butterflies.

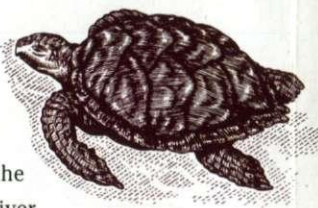
## CENTRAL SARAWAK

Sarawak's extensive river system makes a trip to the central region as easy as it is fascinating.

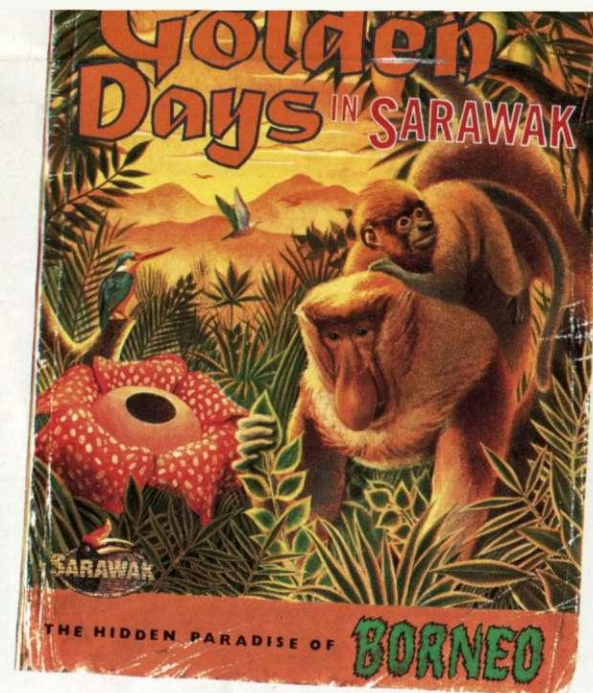
Sibu, built on the banks of the Rajang River, is the main gateway to the centre and a good starting point for river cruises to the inland towns. Longhouses, villages and small towns dot the riverbanks; organised visits to these more remote longhouses can be arranged through a guide in the nearest town.

North of Sibu, about 30 minutes drive from the sleepy town of Bintulu, is every tourist's dream – Similajau National Park with its perfect emerald water, tropical rainforest and long, golden, sandy beaches. The park offers visitors a range of activities such as trekking, bird watching, river and coastal cruises.

South of Sibu and east of Kuching is Batang Ai National Park, home to not only a number of Iban longhouses where most residents still practise their traditional lifestyle, but also the luxurious Batang Ai Longhouse Resort.



Two types of marine turtle visit the offshore islands.



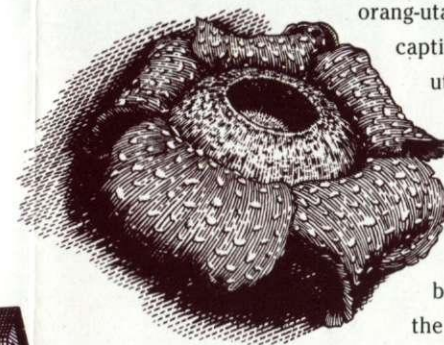
clear streams and waterfalls, some ten metres high. Kubah's rich forest areas are home to mousedeer, squirrels, the state bird – the Hornbill – and many amphibian and reptile species.

Half an hour's drive from Kuching is the Semenggoh Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, a temporary home for various endangered species of Sarawak, especially

orang-utans rescued from captivity. Here, the orang-

utans are trained to return to their natural habitat, eventually living an independent life in the wild. Those which are too old to be trained are kept in the centre.

Niah and Gunung Mulu National Parks in Northwest Sarawak are perhaps the best known in Sarawak with their spectacular limestone cave formations.



A Goliath among flowers, the Rafflesia has a bloom one metre across.



# THE MANY FACES OF SARAWAK



*The Bidayuh are the third largest ethnic group in Sarawak.*

More than 30 ethnic groups live together harmoniously in Sarawak, including 21 native ethnic groups, Malay and Chinese.

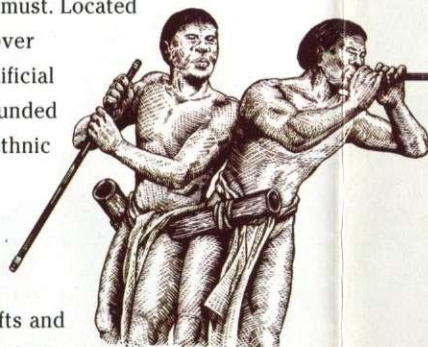
Even with such diversity, individual groups have retained their cultural identity, observing traditional customs and rituals on a day-to-day basis.

For an informative and entertaining insight into the lives and cultures of some of the major ethnic groups in Sarawak, a visit to the living

museum – The Sarawak Cultural Village – is a must. Located

in Damai, the village sprawls over 17 landscaped acres with an artificial lake at the centre. This is surrounded by seven authentic replicas of ethnic houses – Iban, Bidayuh, Penan, Orang Ulu, Melanau, Malay and Chinese – displaying artefacts made by the house residents and demonstrating arts and crafts and fascinating tribal music and dancing. Open seven days a week, this is an easy day or half-day trip from either Kuching or the Damai resort area.

Most tour operators can arrange a visit to an authentic Bidayuh or Iban (the most populous indigenous groups) longhouse close to Kuching, which can include an overnight stay. Depending on the longhouse, you may be entertained with an organised performance, or just enjoy a relaxed look around the longhouse, a shared meal and a chat with the residents. Sarawakians of all groups are renowned for their friendliness and hospitality.



*The Penan are some of the world's last hunter-gatherers*

# TRAIL OF ADVENTURE

The opportunities for an adventure in Sarawak are as numerous as they are diverse. Most tour operators offer trips from half a day to up to two weeks which can take in jungle trekking, mountain climbing, caving, mountain biking or river safaris.

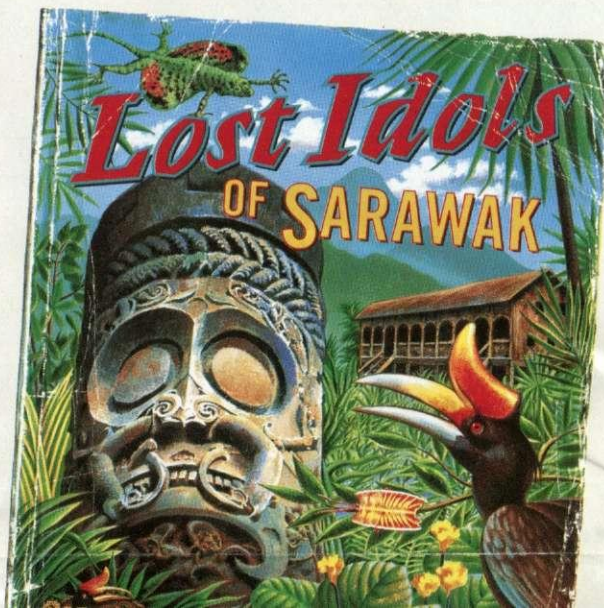
Jungle trekking is available in most of the national parks, offering a close-up view of the amazing flora and fauna of Borneo. Treks are graded according to fitness level required and accommodation could be in a tent, chalet, hostel or longhouse.

Adding an intriguing element to a bush walk is the Headhunters' Trail in Gunung Mulu National Park. The five to six day trek takes you overland and by longboat to forests, caves, river rapids, and the spectacular Pinnacles, along a trail once favoured by local raiding parties of centuries past.

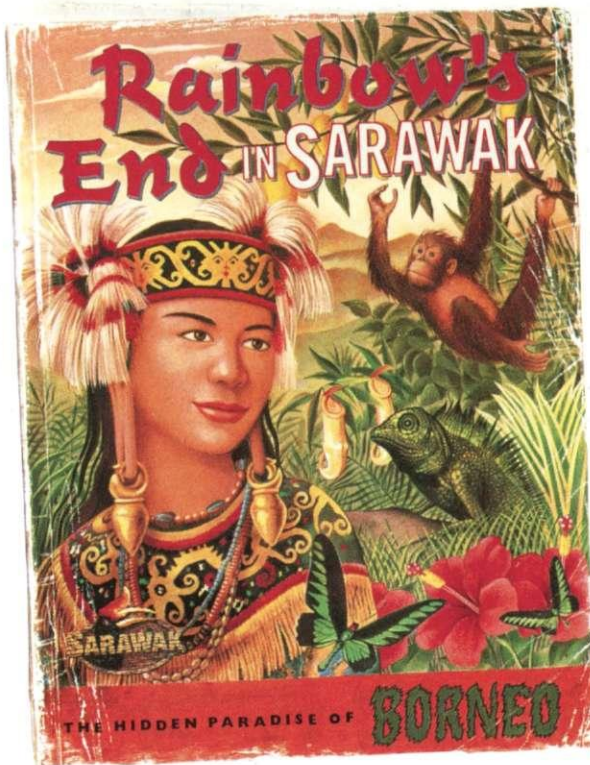
A river safari is an unbeatable way of seeing the jungle from the relative comfort of a motor-propelled longboat. Again, river safaris can be anything from a few hours to a couple of weeks, and can be guided tours or do-it-yourself.

A good introduction to river cruising is an organised river safari and there are many available through tour

*Squirrels in a hurry fly from tree to tree.*







The capital, Kuching, is home to no less than nine museums. If you have time for only one, the most comprehensive is the Sarawak Museum, renowned as one of the best in Asia. Give yourself at least half a day to visit the various displays which include ethnographic exhibits, natural history displays, native artefacts and Chinese porcelain. Other museums of interest include the Islamic Museum and Cat Museum.

The Sunday Market in Kuching (which actually starts on Saturday afternoon) is perhaps the best place to meet local people as indigenous groups travel to town to bring their jungle fruit and vegetables to sell to city folk.

For 19th century  
adventurers, the forests of  
Borneo proved irresistible.



operators in Sarawak. Two starting points within easy reach of Kuching are the Skrang and Lemanak rivers. However, there is also ample opportunity – and water – to strike out on your own, or with a personal guide. The best place to start is the Visitors Information Centre in Kuching.

Gunung Mulu National Park in the northeast has plenty of excitement both above and below ground, with a heady climb up the famous

Pinnacles or subterranean explorations of some of the world's most impressive caves.

Mountain biking is taking off in Sarawak and trails of varying lengths are established in the Kuching area

near Bau, at Gunung Mulu National Park and at the Hilton Batang Ai

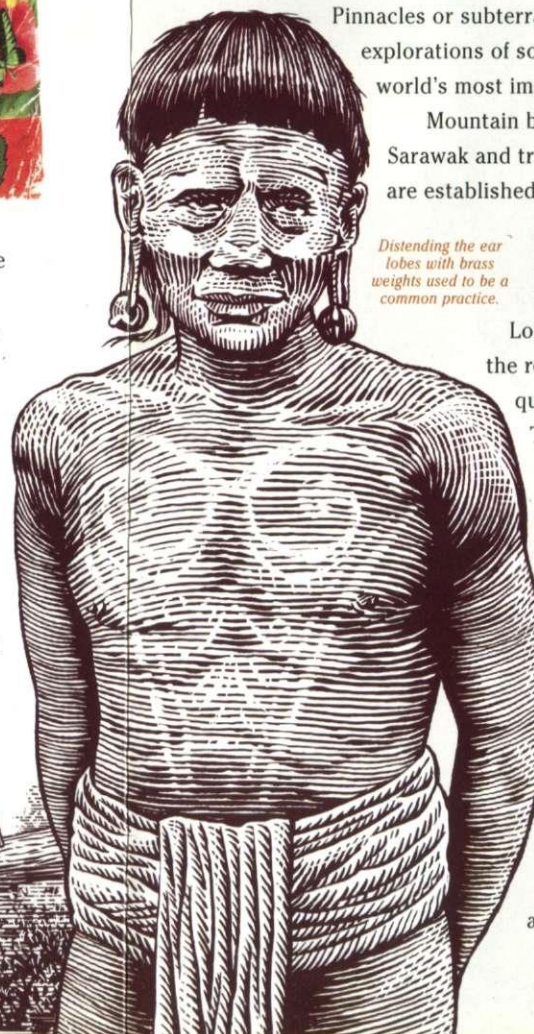
Longhouse Resort. Contact the respective park's headquarters or the Sarawak Tourist Association for more details.

For a range of organised activities in one place, contact the Damai Rainforest Resort Outdoor Activity Centre (Permai Camp). Activities include jungle trekking, survival courses, abseiling and rappelling, climbing, sailing and other land and sea-based sports.



Assassins of the plant world, the carnivorous pitcher plants.

Distending the ear lobes with brass weights used to be a common practice.



## TRAVEL TIPS

### CLIMATE

Sarawak enjoys a tropical climate with average daytime temperatures of 23 to 32 degrees celsius. The rainy season from November to February brings heavier rain and cool evenings.

### LANGUAGE

Malay is the national language, however, English is widely spoken throughout the state.

### GETTING AROUND

Regular flights connect the capital city, Kuching, to the major towns of Sarawak, as do express buses and boats. Hire cars, charter planes, boats and helicopters can also be hired for travel between the towns. Taxi are available in all the major towns; however they are not metered and a fare should be negotiated at the start of your journey.

### RELIGION

The official religion is Islam, there are also Christians, Buddhists and followers of various traditional beliefs. Freedom of worship is respected and churches and temples for all major religions can be found in most towns.

### WORKING HOURS

Private sector offices are open from 9:00am to 5:00pm, banks from 9:30am to 3:30pm from Monday to Friday with a half day on Saturday. Shops are open from 10:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Saturday.

### CURRENCY

The official currency is the Malaysian Ringgit (RM). Money can be exchanged at banks, hotel and licensed money-changers. There are also ATM machines in the towns and major airports.

### WATER

It is safe to drink from the taps in the major towns, however bottled water is readily available.

### ETIQUETTE

Appropriate dress is appreciated when visiting places of worship. Shoes should be removed before entering homes or longhouses. Nude sunbathing is unacceptable.

### TIPPING

A service charge is levied in Sarawak on food, drink and accommodation. Tipping is not customary.



Sarawak Tourist Association  
Tel : 082-410 944 / 082-410 942  
Visitor's Information Centre  
Tel : 082-240 620  
Sarawak Tourism Board  
Tel : 082-423 600  
Sarawak Office  
2nd Floor, Bangunan Rugayah,  
Jalan Song Thian Cheok,  
93100 Kuching, Sarawak  
Tel : 082-246 575 / 246 775  
Fax : 082-246 442  
E-mail : mtpbkch@tourism.gov.my  
Tourism Malaysia  
Tel : 03-2693 5188  
Fax : 03-2693 5884 / 0207  
Website : <http://tourismmalaysia.gov.my>  
Portal : [malaysiamydestination.com](http://malaysiamydestination.com)  
E-mail : [tourism@tourism.gov.my](mailto:tourism@tourism.gov.my)





# SARAWAK

THE HIDDEN PARADISE  
OF BORNEO



#### LAMBIR HILLS NATIONAL PARK

Large range of palms, ferns, pitcher plants, orchids & birdlife.

S O U T H C H I N A S E A

#### SIMILAJAU NATIONAL PARK

Tropical rainforests, sandy beaches, rare green turtles, crocodiles & 185 species of birdlife.





## SABAH

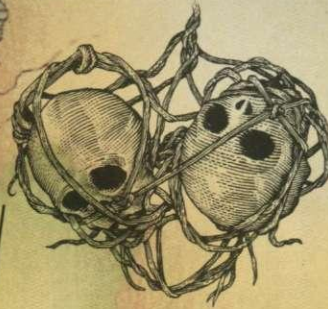
### MIRI

Commercial centre with bustling riverfront markets & beaches. Gateway to Mulu & the Bario Highlands.



### HEAD-HUNTERS' TRAIL AT MULU NATIONAL PARK

Trekkers follow the footsteps of trails used by hunting parties in the past.



## BRUNEI

### MULU

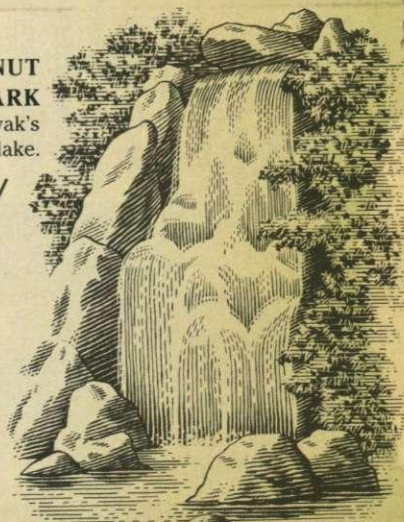
### GUNUNG MULU NATIONAL PARK

One of the last great frontiers of Borneo with complex cave networks, the Pinnacles, rivers & rare wildlife.



### LOAGAN BUNUT NATIONAL PARK

Home to Sarawak's largest natural lake.



### NIAH CAVES NATIONAL PARK

Monkeys, hornbills, butterflies, flying lizards, tree squirrels & caves, which date back over 40,000 years.

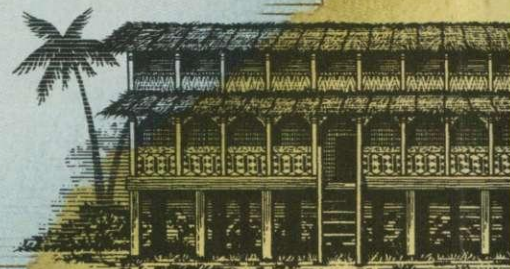
### TUMBINA AGRICULTURAL PARK





## SARAWAK CULTURAL VILLAGE

Display of Sarawak's many cultures in a 'living museum'.



BI  
TAN  
A bar

## SIBU •

Bustling town on the Rajang River.



## TANJUNG DATU NATIONAL PARK

Where the mountains meet the sea. Crystal clear rivers & wildlife abound.



## DAMAI BEACH

Sea-side resorts & world-class golf course in the foothills of Mount Santubong.

## KUBAH NATIONAL PARK

Unusual sandstone park with many waterfalls. Rich forest life.



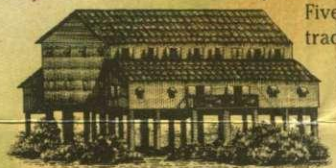
## GUNUNG GADING NATIONAL PARK

Mountainous park with waterfalls. Home to the unusual Rafflesia.

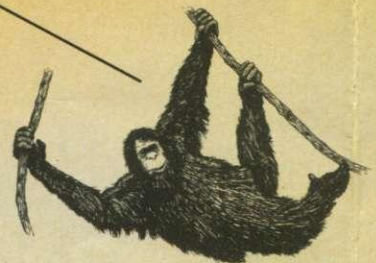


## KUCHING

Capital of Sarawak. Home to colonial buildings, riverfront restaurants, five star hotels & traditional bazaars.



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## SEMENGGU REHABILITATION

Orang-utans & gibbons are trained to live with humans.

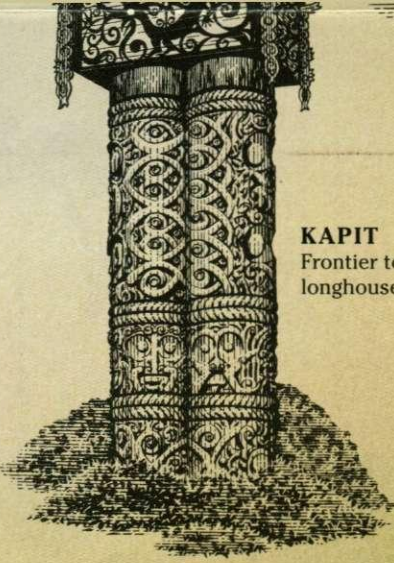
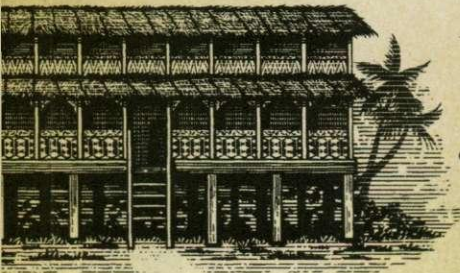




## BINTULU

### TANJUNG BATU BEACH

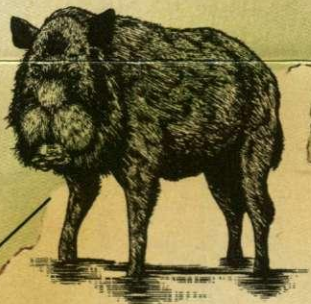
A barbeque & picnic retreat.



## KAPIT

Frontier town. Gateway to longhouses & river towns.

**MOUNTAIN RANGES**  
A natural watershed separating Sarawak from Kalimantan.



### LANJAK-ENTIMAU WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

**BATANG AI  
NATIONAL PARK**  
Home to orang-utans,  
gibbons, hornbills &  
other native wildlife.



## KALIMANTAN

### LONGHOUSE RESORTS

Five star hotels offering traditional style accommodation.



### RANCHAN POOLS

Cascading waterfalls & pools for swimming.



### MENGGOH WILDLIFE HABILITATION CENTRE

ng-utans & other native animals  
trained to live again in the wild.

